

Luke 12:13-21; Colossians 3:1-11
"Jesus, Our Treasure"
Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

July 30/31, 2016
Our Redeemer Lutheran
Vicar Peter Adelsen

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God the Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Amen!

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

[Intro]

A man opens a newspaper and discovers it is dated six months in advance of the time he lives.

Reading through the newspaper, he discovers stories about events that have not yet taken place.

He turns to the sports page and sees scores of games not yet played.

He turns to the financial page and discovers the rise or fall of different stocks and bonds.

He realizes that this information can make him a very wealthy man. A few large bets on an underdog team can make him wealthy beyond imagination.

Investments in stocks that are now low but will go high can fatten his portfolio. He is delighted!

What is going through your mind? What would you do if you were him? Are you starting to think of yourself as Biff Tannen from Back to the Future: Part Two?

As you are thinking about what you would do with this information – there is more to that futuristic newspaper.

That man turns the page and comes to the obituary column. He sees his picture and story.

This changes everything.

[I want it now!]

What would you do?

We certainly live in a consumer driven society.

Buying items in 2016 has never been easier. Beginning in 1958 with the BankAmericard, the credit card has become the quick option for the impulse buy or for paying an unexpected mechanic bill.

Now, it's even easier with apps like ApplePay, where you just show your phone to the clerk to pay your bill.

Using the words of Veruca Salt from *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*:

“I want it now!”

“I don't want to share 'em!”

“Don't care how – I want it now.”

[The Unexpected]

In today's Gospel lesson, a man from the crowd of thousands came up to Jesus to ask him a question – a question that many Rabbis have heard.

You see, it was common for Jewish people to ask a Rabbi to interpret and apply the Torah to specific cases. The Torah deals with inheritance matters in many passages.

The man asks: ***“Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me”*** (Luke 12:13).

But, this man, hears the unexpected from Jesus.

“Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?” (Luke 12:14)

You see, Jesus was not just an everyday, ordinary Rabbi. Jesus is God Himself. This man has no idea who he is talking to.

Jesus then adds, ***“Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions”*** (Luke 12:15).

What do you think was going through that man's mind?

“Take care”, “Be on your guard against covetousness.” How dare you, Jesus of Nazareth. Who do you think you are to say that to me?!

[Parable of the Rich Fool]

Instead of arguing with the man, Jesus told him a parable – a life lesson – about a rich man and his large crop yield. Jesus says this rich man thought to himself:

“What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?”

“I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.”

“And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have ample good laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’”

Does this man sound like Biff Tannen?

Does this man sound like Veruca Salt?

Does this man sound like *you*?

“But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”

So, who will get this man’s crop yield and his larger barn?

While working so hard, this man only thought of himself. After his death, someone else will enjoy the fruit of his work.

You see, this rich fool, was rich, but only in earthly things, but poor toward God.

He coveted his possessions and never thanked God for any of it. His attitude toward his possessions was this: *“I earned it! I can do whatever I want with it!”*

Do *you* ever have that thought?

When you get that paycheck deposited: do you thank *yourself*, or God?

When you purchase an item at a store: do you pat *yourself* on the back, or do you thank God?

When you eat supper around your dining room table or go out to a restaurant, do you thank God in prayer?

[Look Toward Things Above]

The Apostle Paul’s letter to the Colossians likens Luke’s account of this conversation with Jesus and this man.

“Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory” (Colossians 3:2-4).

You see, the Apostle Paul and Jesus the Christ are warning us that the wrath of God is coming. They are asking us today, who is your god?

“Whatever you set your heart on and put your trust in is truly your god” (Martin Luther’s Large Catechism on the First Commandment).

So, who or what do you trust and believe in with *your* whole heart?

Do you cling to yourself?

Do you cling to money?

Do you cling to impurity and passion?

Do you cling to a politician?

Or, do you cling to the True God – The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit?

[Be Rich Toward God]

In today's society, confessing *Jesus is Lord* is risky, because it likely triggers persecution by the world.

As Christians, we have hope beyond our earthly possessions. We have the hope of eternal life through Jesus Christ. So, don't be afraid to proclaim your hope.

We have this hope through His Spoken Word in the Scriptures.

We have this hope through our baptism, when Christ claimed us as His own. We were raised with Christ at our baptism and given new life through the Spirit.

We have this hope through the Lord's Supper, when Christ gives us His body and His blood, which was shed for you and for me.

Through the Word and Sacrament, Jesus forgives all of our sins.

To be rich toward God is to believe that God is the giver of all things, including life and salvation. To show that one believes is to share with others the gifts that God gives.

Let us all seek the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of the Father.

Jesus is our treasure! Amen!

Now, let us make a joyful noise unto the Lord! Amen!